

I am inviting children to this issue of Self & Society. Children, because we have all once been a child, whether in our adult life we want to remember this, or whether we would prefer this fact to disappear into our past; whether we want to have a relationship with 'our inner child', or whether we would prefer this child to disappear into our subconscious.

And besides, children are all around us – possibly in our personal or professional lives. They remind us of who we are. They remind us of who we were. They often tell us who we want to be.

Despite atrocious stories of abuse and neglect exposed in the media, despite unbearable personal accounts brought to therapy by my clients, I do feel tremendously positive about how we have matured as society of parents and carers in understanding children, in appreciating the importance of good parenting, listening, and playing. I also believe we have matured as a society of professionals and created frameworks and a forum where help is available for children to be heard, and not only seen.

In the meantime child psychotherapy, one of the most imperative ways of helping children to sort out their troubled world, has become a difficult, almost a political, issue. We seem to have forgotten that in a society which strives to be inclusive of all children from all social backgrounds we also need to strive for the same inclusiveness in our therapeutic work, approaches and theoretical backgrounds. I have come to believe - after years of working with children and from my experience of establishing a new school of child psychotherapy- that those of us who hold a theoretical standpoint, exclusive of all others, may not be truly available to, nor able to fully embrace, the diverse nature of therapeutic work with children.

I have therefore invited a range of professionals working with children to contribute to this issue. They all seem to be saying that there needs to be a place for every child in our hearts. In addition, I also believe that there needs to be a place for a variety of work, modalities and theoretical perspectives, away from the politics of our profession.

This issue of Self & Society hopes to be a reminder that children need us adults to be there, to help to make sense of the world around them. As adults, it is our responsibility to put in order our children's environment, and make sure that it is safe and nourishing. Without happy and striving children, there is no happy Self and there is no striving Society.

Bozena Merrick

Guest editor.

*Director of Terapia, Training in Integrative Child Psychotherapy and Counselling.
0208 446 0809. training@terapia.co.uk <http://www.terapia.co.uk>*